

JAN 06 2005

PATENTS
Attorney Docket No. FOM-143.01
98,004**REMARKS***Finality of Office Action*

Applicant's Attorney thanks the Examiner for considering the issue of finality of the action raised by Applicant's Attorney in two telephone conversations with the Examiner that took place on September 27 and 28, 2004. In the initial conversation, Applicant's Attorney pointed out to the Examiner that the Examiner had entered a new ground of rejection for claims 16 and 17, which had not been amended by Applicant in the previous response, and thus under MPEP § 706.07(a), the action dated August 12, 2004 should not be final. In the following conversation, the Examiner confirmed that the action should be non-final, and requested that Applicant's Attorney, in the response, note the conversations.

Claim Rejections/Allowed Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 1-14, based on the statement of reasons given in the Office Action dated February 24, 2004, and with amendments to overcome 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 made by Applicant in the Response dated May 24, 2004.

In this response, Applicant cancels pending rejected claims 15-20.

CONCLUSION

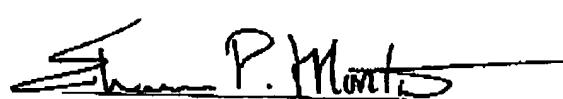
Applicant believes this Response to be fully responsive to the present Office Action. Thus, based on the foregoing Remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant requests allowance of the application.

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Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the Applicant's undersigned Attorney if any issues are deemed to remain prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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